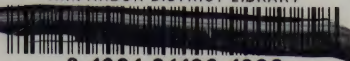


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Emily[®] AND the Strangers

BREAKING THE RECORD

Rob Reger
Mariah Huehner
Cat Farris

Graphic Novels

And The Stra





Emily[®]
AND the Strangers



Emily[®] AND the Strangers

Volume 2

BREAKING THE RECORD

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EMILY AND THE STRANGERS VOLUME 2: BREAKING THE RECORD

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CONTRACT
WE, _____, AGREE
TO SIGN AWAY ALL
RIGHTS, INTERESTS,
SONGS, CATS, ETC., TO
AWESOMELY AWESOME RECORDS
WITHOUT CLAIM TO ANY
FUTURE ACTION OR REACTION
ON OUR PART. AND SAVING US
FROM THE PAIN OF
LIVING IN A
WORLD WHERE
WE ARE
NOT
THE
ONLY
ONE
WITH
A
CAT.
+





I'M EMILY AND THESE
ARE THE STRANGERS. WE'RE
THE MOST ZORKINGLY AWESOME
BAND YOU'VE EVER HEARD.

EVAN IS ANOTHER
GUITARIST, ALMOST
AS GOOD AS ME.

WILLOW AND
WINSTON ARE
TWINS, WITH
PRETTY DIVERGEN
TASTES. SHE'S
ALL HORNS.
HE'S ALL BASS.

RAVEN IS A BOT I MADE
WAY BACK WHEN. SHE'S A
DRUMMIN' MACHINE. LITERALLY.

AND LAST WE
HAVE TRILOGY. WE
"MADE" HER, MAYBE.

I WON THIS RAD GUITAR,
THEN WE WON THIS TOTALLY
TYPICAL BATTLE OF THE
BANDS, AND MET THE GHOST
OF PROFESSA KRACKEN.

I THOUGHT
IT WAS PRETTY
AMAZING-
SAUCE...

NEXT UP, WE'RE GOING
TO TAKE OVER THE
WORLD. OF COURSE.



TYPICALLY, WE'VE
HIT A SMALL SNAG.
THE CONTRACT.



THE PRINT
ON THIS IS EVEN
TOO TINY FOR
MY MAGNIFYINGLY
MAGNIFIED
GOOGLES.

WELL...THAT
MEANS IT'S, LIKE,
REALLY OFFICIAL,
RIGHT?

MAYBE.
OR IT'S VERY
SHADY.



DRAPPLES.



I DON'T LIKE IT.
TOO MANY RULES.
I DON'T DO
RULES.



YOU'RE
TOO
SUSPICIOUS,
EM.

I DON'T
KNOW--IT *IS*
A LOT OF
TEXT...

YOU
FORGOT
THE REST OF
MY NAME,
EV.

BE
CAREFUL.
THOSE LOOK
SLIPPERY...

COME ON!
IT'S A CONTRACT.
IT'S SUPPOSED TO
BE LONG AND
COMPLICATED.

SO?
DOESN'T MEAN
WE HAVE TO
SIGN IT

WHY NOT? WE WON. NOW WE CAN CUT AN ALBUM, AND PEOPLE CAN HEAR OUR MUSIC. ISN'T THAT WHAT YOU WANT?

NO. WHY SHOULD I CARE IF ANYONE HEARS OUR MUSIC? WE SHOULD DO IT FOR OURSELVES.

YOU'VE GOT TO BE KIDDING.

I THINK--

MUSIC ISN'T ABOUT CONTRACTS AND FANS. YOU SHOULD KNOW THAT, MR. PRODIGY.

WHAT ABOUT--

I WANT TO SHARE OUR SOUND. WHAT'S THE POINT OF KEEPING IT TO OURSELVES? THAT'S SELFISH.

I DON'T THINK THAT'S WHY PROFESSA KRAKEN GOT US TOGETHER.



HOW WOULD YOU KNOW? YOU DIDN'T WIN THE GUITAR.

THIS ISN'T HELPING ANY--

YEAH? WELL, MAYBE I SHOULD HAVE.

SO, TRILOGY... WHAT'S IT LIKE IN THE ETHER OF SOUND?



REALLY BLUE. AND KIND OF TART, LIKE A LEMON.

THAT'S... NICE?

THE SOUND IS ALL AROUND YOU, ALL THE TIME. A BEAT IN YOUR BRAIN. YOU CAN FEEL, LIKE... EVERYTHING.

LIKE YOU'RE PART OF SOMETHING... BIGGER.



TRILOGY HAS A POINT.

SHE DOES?

WINSTON, OF COURSE. SHE'S TALKING ABOUT ALL OF US AND WHAT WE'VE MADE WITH THIS BAND.

OH. YEAH. SURE. THAT.





DON'T EVEN TRY TO TELL ME WHAT TO DO WITH MY GUITAR.

WITHOUT ME, THERE WOULD BE NO GUITAR, NO BAND, AND NO WINNING SONG.



IT'S ALL ABOUT YOU. AGAIN.

I'M NOT THE ONLY ONE WITH A FIZZBATTING FAT HEAD, KID.

AT LEAST I'M WILLING TO CONSIDER OTHER PEOPLE'S FEELINGS.

YEAH, YOU'RE ALL HEART. THIS DOESN'T HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH YOU WANTING TO BE FAMOUS OR ANYTHING.

WHAT'S WRONG WITH WANTING SOME RECOGNITION?

WHATEVER, YOU'RE JUST PIGGYBACKING ON MY PRIZE.

WHY, YOU--

ENOUGH!

YOU'RE BOTH BEING TERRIBLE! THERE ARE OTHER PEOPLE IN THE WORLD, YOU KNOW. NOT TO MENTION THIS BAND.



NEITHER OF YOU DID THIS ON YOUR OWN.

IF YOU CAN'T MANAGE TO INCLUDE US, WELL, SEE HOW WELL YOU DO WITHOUT US.

THINK ABOUT IT.

CAN WE GET ICE CREAM?

ER, OKAY.

THIS IS ALL YOUR FAULT, OR BEING SO BOSSY.

YEAH?

I'D SAY IT'S MORE YOU BEING SO STROOZING PUSHY ALL THE TIME.

YES.



THIS IS REALLY STUPID. YOU KNOW THAT, RIGHT?

MAYBE.

COME ON, LET'S BE FRIENDS AGAIN. WE CAN'T KEEP DYING FOR TOP DOG.

I PREFER CATS.

BUT...MAYBE YOU'RE RIGHT. I'D RATHER MAKE MUSIC THAN FIGHT.



GOOD. LET'S GO GET 'EM BACK.

I HOPE THEY DIDN'T GET TOO FAR--

APPARENTLY NOT.

HI! ALL FIXED?

BLOMP

OW.

I STILL WANT ICE CREAM...

BOLTS!

OKAY, WE NEED TO FIGURE THIS CONTRACT THING OUT. I DON'T LIKE IT, BUT YOU ALL KNOW THAT.

THAT'S UNDERSTANDABLE, SINCE IT'S SO HARD TO READ.

I DON'T THINK THAT'S THE PROBLEM, IS IT, EMILY?

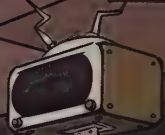
NO, IT'S NOT.

WE WON THE BATTLE SO I-- SO **WE**--COULD KEEP THE PROFESSA'S GUITAR AND DO THIS BAND THING.

THIS READS LIKE THE CRABBING LABEL WILL BE LOOKING OVER OUR SHOULDERS, TELLIN' US WHAT TO PLAY.

MAYBE IT WON'T BE LIKE THAT. I THINK WE SHOULD TALK TO THE GUY ON THE CONTRACT.

MR. CRAWLY? THAT'S A WEIRD NAME...



WHAT DO YOU THINK HE'LL BE LIKE?

PROBABLY OLD. HE OWNS A RECORD LABEL. HE MUST BE OLD.

I DON'T KNOW...

RING RING

RING RING

WELL, HELLO, STRANGERS!



I WAS HOPING
I'D HEAR FROM YOU.
WE HAVE SO MUCH TO
TALK ABOUT!

SO MANY
PLANS TO MAKE,
ALBUMS TO
CUT.

AND, OF
COURSE,
CONTRACTS
TO SIGN.

SO, WHAT
CAN I DO FOR
MY FAVORITE
NEW BAND?



YOU CAN EXPLAIN
THIS RIDICULOUS
CONTRACT.

HOW MANY
TREES DID YOU HAVE TO
KILL TO MAKE IT?

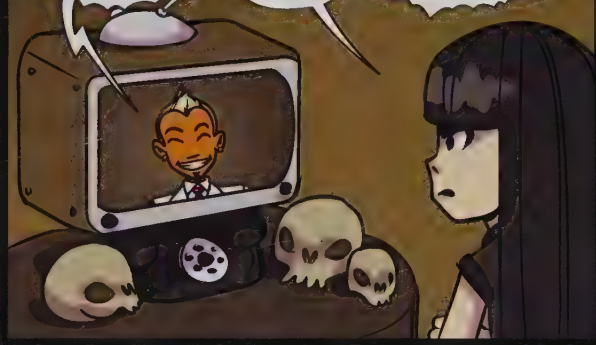
YOU MUST'VE
GOTTEN MICE TO WRITE
ALL THE SMALL
PRINT.



I
UNDERSTAND.
IT IS ALL A BIT
CONFUSING
AND, OF COURSE,
YOU'RE ALL SO...
YOUNG.

THANKS
EVER SO.

WHY DON'T YOU
ALL COME DOWN HERE
FOR A LITTLE TÊTE-À-
TÊTE? WE'LL HASH
IT ALL OUT.



I THINK WE
SHOULD GO.
I'VE ALWAYS
WANTED TO SEE
THE INSIDE OF
AWESOMELY
AWESOME
RECORDS.

CAN'T
HURT,
RIGHT?

I HEARD
THEY HAVE THEIR
OWN DANCE
CLUB. VERY
EXCLUSIVE.

AND I
HEARD THEY HAVE
A WHOLE FLOOR
WITH NOTHING BUT
AQUARIUMS FILLED
WITH RARE AND
EXOTIC FISH.

ARE ANY
OF THEM
SQUID?

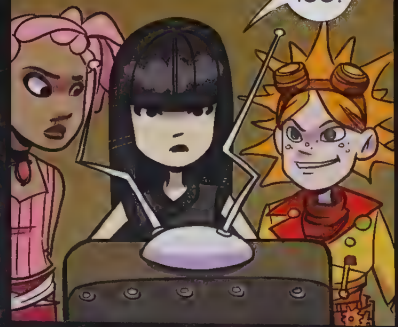
ME, I'M PRETTY
SURE THIS IS
GOING TO BE
A DISASTER.



ALL RIGHT, WE'LL
COME DOWN TODAY.
STRAIGHTAWAY.

SPLENDID! I
CAN'T WAIT TO MEET
YOU AND GET THIS
ALL SORTED.

YES.
ME,
TOO.



SOMETHING ABOUT
THIS FEELS WRONG.

I'D RATHER BE BACK IN THE
LAB, MAKING SOMETHIN'.



LET'S TAKE A SHORTCUT.
THE SOONER WE CAN GET
THIS MEETING OVER WITH,
THE SOONER WE CAN
GET BACK TO
ROCKIN'.

DO YOU
THINK THEY'LL
EXPLAIN IT ALL?
THE CONTRACT,
I MEAN?

SURE THEY
WILL. IT'LL BE
FINE. YOU'LL
SEE.

YEAH,
RIGHT.



THIS STRAY CAT
PROBLEM IS REALLY
GETTING OUT OF
HAND. WHERE ARE
THEY ALL COMING
FROM?

I NOTICED
A LOT NEAR MY
HOUSE, TOO.
POOR THINGS.

COME ON,
WE CAN CHECK
ON THESE CATS LATER.
WE SHOULD BE ON
TIME FOR THIS
MEETING.

THIS CAT
THING SEEMS
MORE IMPORTANT
THAN SOME SILLY
CONTRACT.

WE
MADE A
PROMISE.



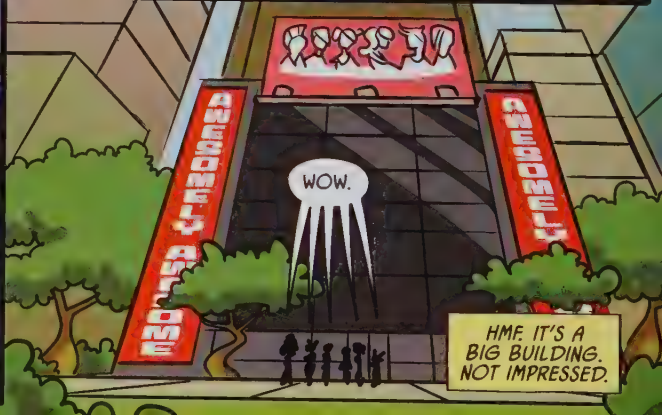
OKAY, OKAY.
LET'S GO. BUT
WE'RE COMING
BACK THIS WAY
AND FIGURIN'
OUT WHAT'S
GOING ON.

DEAL.
NOW
LET'S GET
GOING.



WOW.

HME. IT'S A
BIG BUILDING.
NOT IMPRESSED.



HELLO! YOU MUST BE THE STRANGERS. EMILY, WILLOW, WINSTON, EVAN, RAVEN, AND... TRILOGY? IS THAT RIGHT? SPLENDID! MR. CRAWLY IS WAITING! LET ME JUST CALL YOUR ESCORT...

BZZZZ

AND HERE SHE IS. MS. ARMITAGE WILL SHOW YOU UP. WE CAN'T WAIT FOR YOU TO BE A PART OF THE AWESOMELY AWESOME RECORDS FAMILY!

UM, THANKS?

THAT GUY REALLY NEEDS TO TRY DECAF.

KEEP OUT!
SUPER SECRET LAB

ER, HELLO. I'LL BE SHOWING YOU A BIT OF THE PLACE. PLEASE DON'T WANDER. YOU MIGHT GET LOST.

THANKS FOR SHOWING US AROUND.

THIS PLACE IS WICKED!

...YES. IT IS. WATCH OUT FOR THE CLOSING DOOR.

TRILOGY, YOU'RE SMUDGING THE GLASS.

EVERYTHING LOOKS SO TEENY!

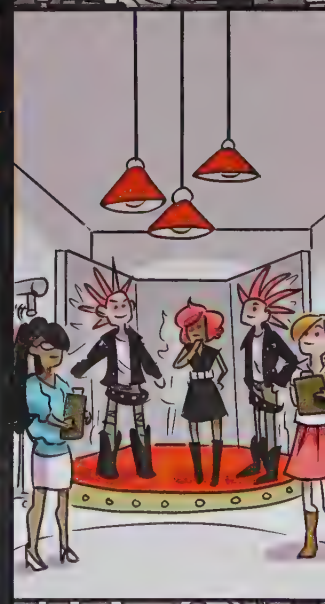
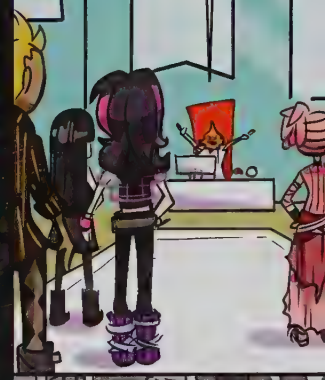
SO, MS. ARMITAGE. HOW LONG HAVE YOU WORKED HERE? LIKE BEING A COG IN A WHEEL? WORKING FOR THE MAN? WHAT DO YOU DO, ANYWAY? WHY ARE YOU WEARING A LAB COAT?

ERM. SIX MONTHS, MAYBE, LOTS OF THINGS, AND I LIKE THE WAY IT LOOKS?

INTERESTING. SHE'S DEFINITELY NOT TELLIN' THE TRUTH.

WELCOME, WELCOME! I GUESS WE AREN'T "STRANGERS" ANYMORE, EH? HA, HA!

PERFECT. HE THINKS HE'S FUNNY.





YEAH. GREAT. WE'RE HERE, YOU'RE HERE.

NOW WHAT'S THE DEAL? WHAT DO YOU REALLY WANT FROM US?

I LIKE YOUR DIRECTNESS, MS. STRANGE. IMPORTANT TO BE FORTHRIGHT IN LIFE.

IT'S SIMPLE, REALLY. WHAT WE WANT, WHAT I AND AWESOMELY AWESOME RECORDS WANT, IS TO SYNERGISTICALLY FACILITATE MAKING THE STRANGERS A WORLDWIDE PHENOMENON.

WE HAVE A TRIED-AND-TRUE FORMULA THAT WILL TAKE YOUR UNIQUE AND COMPELLING COMBINATION OF PERSONALITIES AND SHOWCASE THEM TO THEIR FULLEST. YOU WILL ALL BE EPIC PHENOMENONS.

WITH OUR STATE-OF-THE-ART STUDIO AND TEAMS OF EXPERTS WE CAN MAKE YOU NOT ONLY HOUSEHOLD NAMES, BUT GLOBAL STARS.



WELL. YOU CERTAINLY USED A LOT OF WORDS.

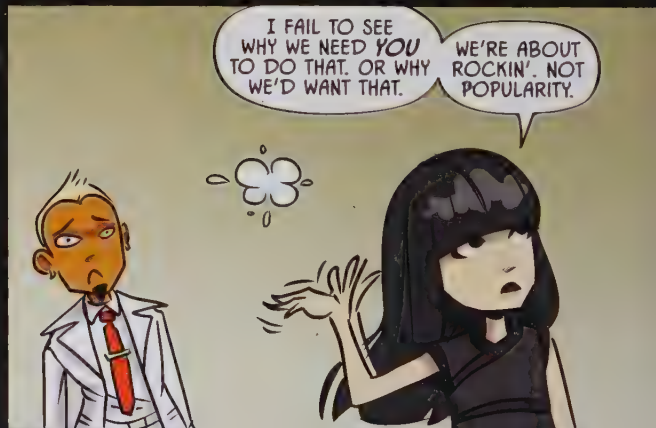
WHAT ABOUT THE MUSIC, THOUGH? YOU DIDN'T MENTION THAT ONCE.

HA, HA, YOU'RE A CLEVER LITTLE ONE, AREN'T YOU? NOTHING GETS PAST YOU.

NO. IT DOESN'T.



THINK OF IT, EMILY. YOU, IN FRONT OF MILLIONS, ALL OF THEM CHANTING YOUR NAME.



I FAIL TO SEE WHY WE NEED YOU TO DO THAT. OR WHY WE'D WANT THAT.

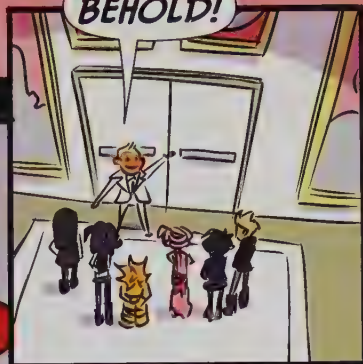
WE'RE ABOUT ROCKIN'. NOT POPULARITY.



I CAN TELL YOU'RE
A YOUNG LADY
WHO NEEDS SOME
CONVINCING.

WELL, LET
ME SHOW YOU
EXACTLY WHAT WE'RE
OFFERING.

BEHOLD!



OUR CUSTOM-
BUILT, WORLD-
RENOUNDED, STATE-
OF-THE-ART
RECORDING
STUDIO.

EVERYTHING
YOU COULD EVER
WANT TO MAKE
YOUR SOUND
SING!

WHOA.

YOWZA.

ZORKING
HUCKBATS.

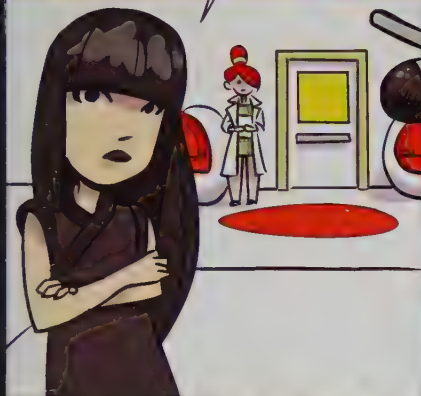
SHINY!

BOLTS AND
WHISTLES.





I'M MORE
CURIOUS ABOUT
WHAT'S BEHIND THAT
MYSTERIOUS DOOR
OVER THERE.



MYSTERIOUS
DOOR? WE HAVE
NOTHING TO HIDE.
WE'RE JUST A
RECORD LABEL,
MAKING MUSIC.



SO, YOU
WON'T MIND ME
CHECKING OUT
WHAT'S BACK
THERE, THEN?



**AWESOMELY
AWESOME
PERSONNEL
ONLY!**

Very secret door.
Nothing to worry about.
Stay out!



OH, *THAT* DOOR.
SORRY, THAT'S JUST
WHERE OUR OTHER
BANDS ARE PRACTICING.
CAN'T DISTURB THEM.
LET'S GO TO THE
LOUNGE!

BUT--



EMILY,
KNOCK IT
OFF.



TRY SOME OF THESE NEW FIZZY DRINKS. THEY'RE DELICIOUS. WOULD YOU LIKE STRAWBERRY BLUES OR MANGO MADNESS?

STRAWBERRY SOUNDS LOVELY, THANK YOU.

I JUST NEED AN OUTLET...

MANGO FOR ME.

CAN I MIX 'EM?



SO! NOW YOU'VE SEEN EVERYTHING WE HAVE TO OFFER. SHALL WE GET DOWN TO BUSINESS?

I THINK I SPEAK FOR EVERYONE WHEN I SAY--

WE NEED SOME MORE TIME.



I STILL WANT TO KNOW WHAT ALL THE FINE PRINT SAYS.



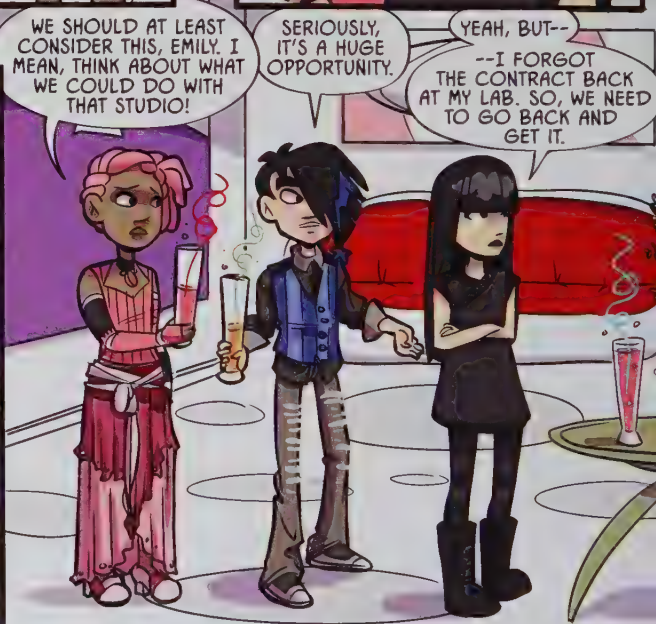
OH, IT'S ALL BORING, SILLY STUFF. A FEW... SUGGESTIONS. THAT'S ALL.



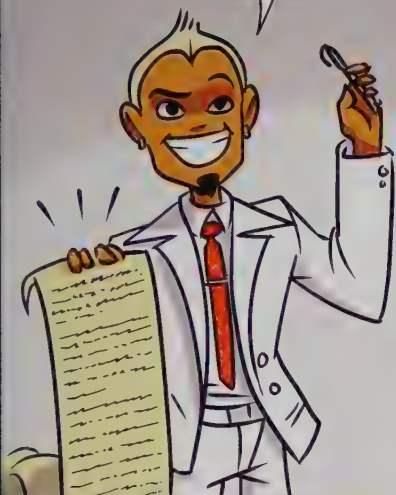
WE SHOULD AT LEAST CONSIDER THIS, EMILY. I MEAN, THINK ABOUT WHAT WE COULD DO WITH THAT STUDIO!

SERIOUSLY, IT'S A HUGE OPPORTUNITY.

YEAH, BUT--
--I FORGOT THE CONTRACT BACK AT MY LAB. SO, WE NEED TO GO BACK AND GET IT.



OH, NOT TO WORRY!
I HAVE A COPY RIGHT
HERE. JUST SIGN ON THE
DOTTED LINE, AND WE'LL
BE SET FOR MAKING,
AHEM, BEAUTIFUL MUSIC
TOGETHER!



NO. WE NEED
TO GO HOME AND
TALK IT ALL OUT.
AS A GROUP.
ALONE.



WELL. I CAN'T
FORCE YOU, OF COURSE.
BUT I SHOULD WARN YOU:
THIS OFFER WON'T LAST
FOREVER.

AND THERE'S
A SIGNIFICANT ADVANCE
AVAILABLE FOR A SPEEDY...
ACCEPTANCE. OF **ALL**
THE TERMS.



OH, THANK YOU.
I PROMISE WE'LL GET
THIS ALL BACK TO
YOU AS SOON AS
WE CAN.

THANKS FOR
UNDERSTANDING.
YOU'RE THE
BESTEST!



IF THAT GUY IS
FOR REAL, I'LL EAT
ONE OF MY CATS.

NOW I JUST HAVE
TO FIGURE OUT
HOW TO GET THE
STARS OUT OF
EVERYONE
ELSE'S EYES.





I DON'T KNOW WHY YOU'RE BEING SO DIFFICULT. HOW MANY RECORD OFFERS DO YOU THINK WE'RE GOING TO GET?

I DON'T CARE. SOMETHING ISN'T RIGHT.

IT'S LIKE ALL THESE CATS WANDERING AROUND. WHERE ARE THEY COMING FROM? WHY ARE THERE SO MANY? AND WHAT'S WITH THESE KUTE KITTIES LABELS?



YOU'RE AVOIDING THE TOPIC AT HAND. GETTING DISTRACTED. AGAIN.



HE'S RIGHT. WE NEED TO STICK TO THIS WHOLE CONTRACT THING. AND THE ADVANCE MONEY.

IT'S A LOT TO CONSIDER.



CAN'T WE DO BOTH? MAYBE WE COULD USE THE ADVANCE TO HELP OUT THESE CATS.

WHEE!

I MEAN, EMILY IS RIGHT, TOO. THERE SURE ARE A LOT OF THEM. AND THEY LOOK SO SAD.



OKAY, FINE. BUT WHAT ABOUT THESE "SUGGESTIONS" FROM CRAWLY? WHAT ARE THEY?

I DON'T WANT TO SUDDENLY HAVE TO DRESS IN MATCHING OUTFITS OR...

...SOMETHING **WORSE**. LIKE CHANGE OUR SOUND.





KITTIES!

WHAT IN THE
WORLD--

WHY ARE
THEY ALL
HERE?

GOOD
THING I'M NOT
ALLERGIC.

THERE
SURE ARE A
LOT OF BLACK
CATS HERE...

THIS HAS
OFFICIALLY GOTTEN
OUT OF HAND.
OR PAW.

I THINK THE
CONTRACT CAN
WAIT.

AGREED?

AGREED.

YEAH, THIS
IS JUST TOO
WEIRD.

OKAY, TROOPS,
I HAVE A MISSION
FOR YOU.

WE NEED TO
KNOW WHY THERE
ARE SO MANY STRAYS,
WHERE THEY CAME
FROM, AND WHAT
THEY WANT.

GOT
IT?

NO MESSIN'
ABOUT. FIND
OUT WHAT'S
GOING ON
AND FAST.

YOU
CAN DO
IT.

REPORT
BACK IN AN
HOUR!

WHILE THEY'RE
OUT INVESTIGATING,
MAYBE THIS TABBY
CAN HELP?

I THINK
HE'S VERY
SMART.





WELL? DID IT TELL YOU ANYTHING?

OH, YEAH. HE SURE DID.



GOOD KITTY.

PURRRR...



JUST GIVE ME A MINUTE. I NEED TO CONNECT THIS AND--

--ADJUST THIS.

IS SHE MAKING WHAT I THINK SHE IS?

LOOKS LIKE IT.



THERE. THIS SHOULD DO IT.

ER, I DON'T THINK THAT'S BIG ENOUGH TO HOLD ALL THE CATS OUT THERE...



OH, IT'S NOT FOR THE CATS.

WHO'S IT FOR, THEN?

JUST GET READY.

READY FOR WHAT?



SKRRKT

SHUT IT. NOW.

WHEN I YELL, YOU ALL GET BACK. FAST.

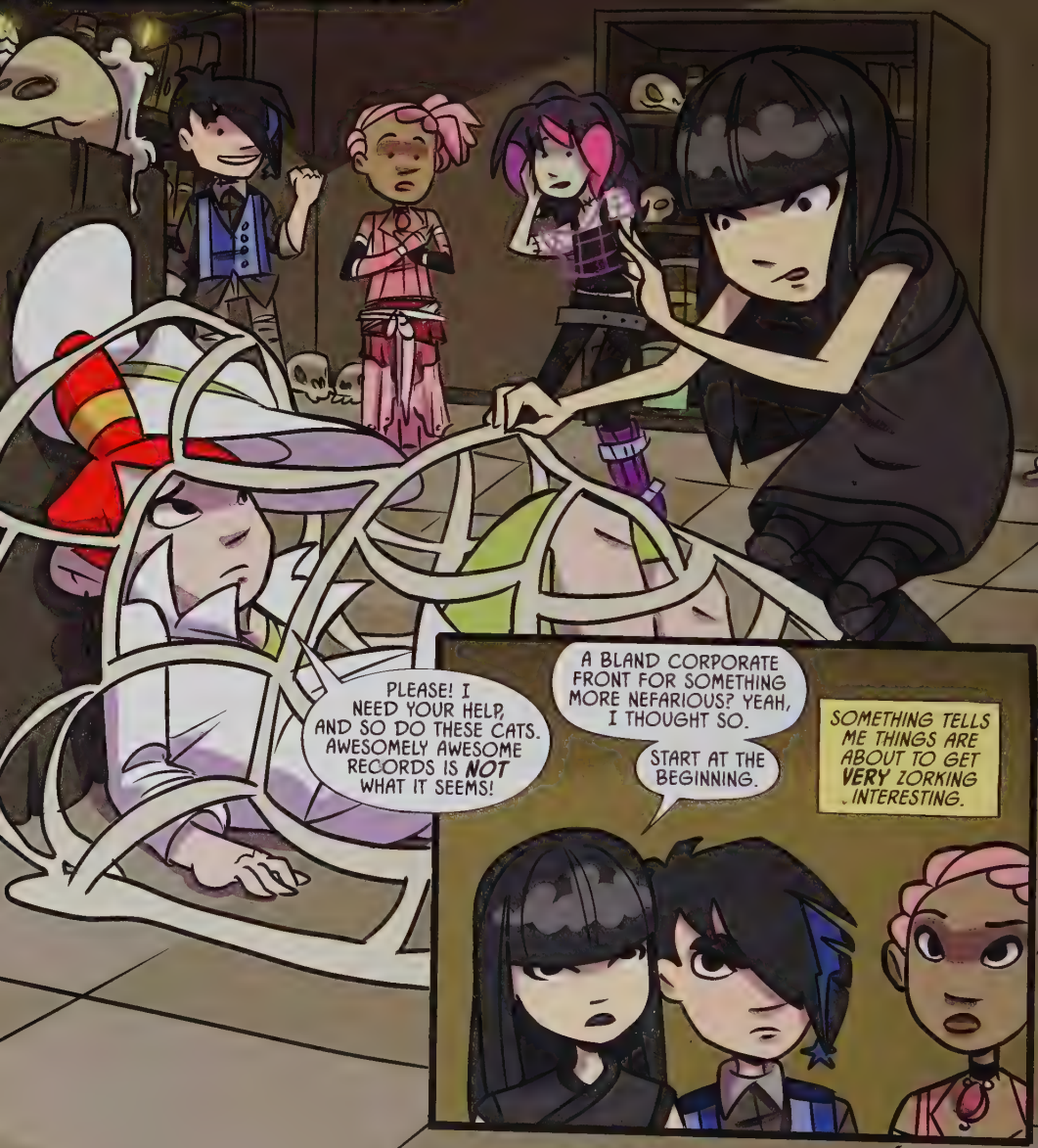


YOU?

EXPLAIN
YOURSELF,
LADY.

OR WE
TURN YOU
INTO SOMETHING
SQUISHY...

THWPT



PLEASE! I
NEED YOUR HELP,
AND SO DO THESE CATS.
AWESOMELY AWESOME
RECORDS IS **NOT**
WHAT IT SEEMS!

A BLAND CORPORATE
FRONT FOR SOMETHING
MORE NEFARIOUS? YEAH,
I THOUGHT SO.

START AT THE
BEGINNING.

SOMETHING TELLS
ME THINGS ARE
ABOUT TO GET
VERY ZORKING
INTERESTING.





ARE THE STRANGERS.

WE WON A GUITAR, TALKED
TO A DEAD ROCK GOD,
AND NOW WE'RE TRYIN' TO
CUT OUR FIRST ALBUM.

ONLY PROBLEM IS THAT
OUR NEW RECORD COMPANY
WANTS TO CHANGE US, AND
I'M NOT FEELIN' IT.

WE ALSO HAVE THIS
WEIRD STRAY CAT
PROBLEM HAPPENING,
AND SOMEONE'S BEEN
FOLLOWING US.

WE'RE ABOUT TO
FIND OUT WHY.





SO. YOU WERE SNEAKING AROUND, FOLLOWING A BUNCH OF KIDS, BECAUSE?

I HAD TO MAKE SURE YOU COULD BE TRUSTED. THAT YOU WERE REALLY WHO YOU SAID YOU WERE.

UHM, WHO ELSE WOULD WE BE?

YOU NEVER KNOW. IT'S BEEN SO HARD TO KNOW WHO TO TRUST.

ENOUGH WITH THE CRYPTO TALK. WHAT DO YOU WANT?

I WANT YOUR HELP. I NEED IT. **THEY** NEED IT.

WHO'S "THEY"?

THE CATS. AWESOMELY AWESOME RECORDS IS BEHIND THIS APOCALYPSE OF STRAY FELINES. THEY AREN'T AT ALL WHAT THEY SAY THEY ARE-- THEY'RE A FRONT FOR KUTE KITTIES.

THEY DON'T CARE ABOUT MUSIC. AND THEY DON'T CARE ABOUT WHAT THEY'RE DOING TO THESE POOR CATS, BUT IT'S SOMETHING BAD.

YOU HAVE TO HELP ME. I DON'T KNOW WHAT ELSE TO DO!



"...I'VE LOVED ANIMALS AND WANTED TO BE A VET.

"MY FAMILY IS A BIT...DIFFERENT. CREATIVE TYPES. BUT THEY GOT IT. I MADE THAT MY LIFE'S WORK.



"EVENTUALLY, KUTE KITTIES APPROACHED ME. I THOUGHT THEY WANTED WHAT I DID. TO HELP ANIMALS.

"MR. CRAWLY WAS VERY... CONVINCING.



"HE TOLD ME WE WERE GIVING STRAYS A HOME. PEOPLE WOULD BRING THEM TO US, AND WE'D MAKE THEIR LIVES BETTER.

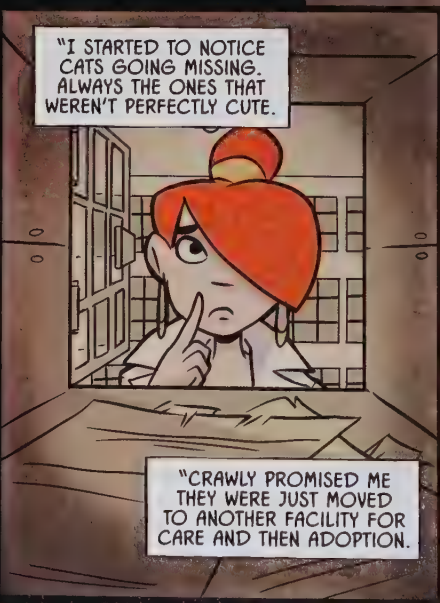
"AT FIRST, EVERYTHING SEEMED PERFECTLY NORMAL.



"TOO PERFECT, I GUESS.



"I STARTED TO NOTICE CATS GOING MISSING. ALWAYS THE ONES THAT WEREN'T PERFECTLY CUTE.



"CRAWLY PROMISED ME THEY WERE JUST MOVED TO ANOTHER FACILITY FOR CARE AND THEN ADOPTION.

"HE WAS SORT OF TELLING THE TRUTH.



"I COULDN'T FIND OUT WHAT THEY WERE DOING TO THEM, BUT THE CATS CLEARLY WEREN'T GETTING THE HAPPY HOMES I'D IMAGINED."



BUT THIS ISN'T A GREAT SOLUTION EITHER. THEY'RE JUST ROAMING AROUND, WITHOUT HOMES.



SPEAK
FOR YOURSELF,
SPORT.

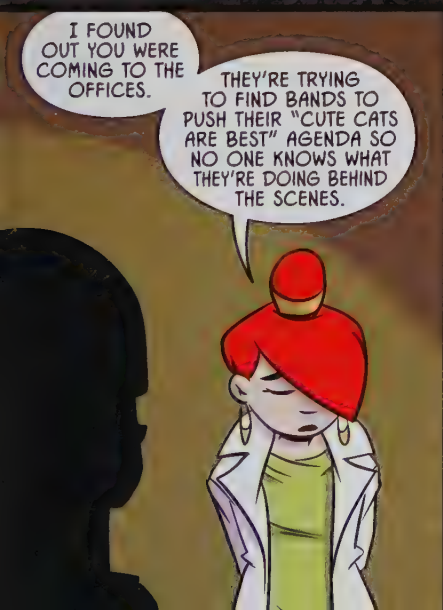


YEAH,
THAT'S NOT
CREEPY AT
ALL.

NOT
LIKE
THAT!



THEY'RE TRYING TO FIND BANDS TO PUSH THEIR "CUTE CATS ARE BEST" AGENDA SO NO ONE KNOWS WHAT THEY'RE DOING BEHIND THE SCENES.



AND YOU
THOUGHT WE MIGHT
BE ABLE TO DO
SOMETHING.

YOU SEEM PRETTY
RESOURCEFUL.

AND I HAD
TO WARN YOU ABOUT
CRAWLY. DON'T TRUST
ANYTHING HE SAYS.







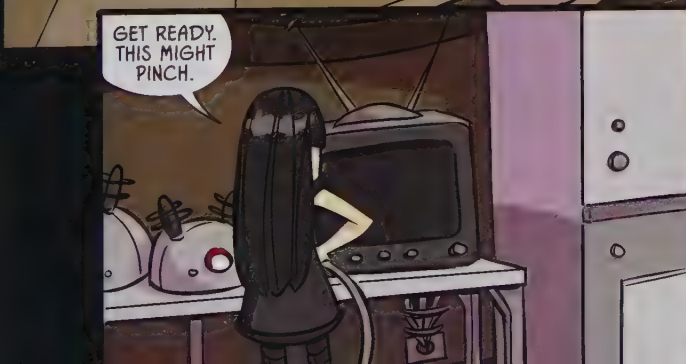
ONE: **NEVER**
INTERRUPT ME
IF YOU LIKE
YOUR LIMBS
ATTACHED.

TWO: SIT
DOWN AND I'LL
SHOW YOU.

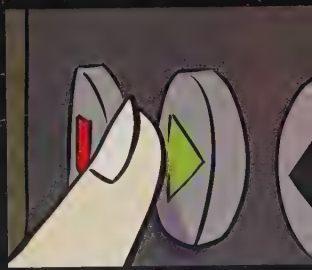


I FEEL
LIKE I'M IN
SCHOOL.

TRUST ME,
YOU'VE NEVER
SEEN ANYTHING
LIKE THIS IN
BIOLOGY
101.



GET READY.
THIS MIGHT
PINCH.





WHEN I SHOW
'EM, IT CHANGES
EVERYTHING.

NO ONE SAYS A
SNARZWONKING
WORD. NOT
EVEN EVAN.



THIS ISN'T ABOUT
WHETHER OR NOT WE
CAN DO SOMETHING.

WE
HAVE
TO.

STILL THINK
IT'S NOT OUR
PROBLEM?



NO.
NO WAY.
THIS CAN'T
CONTINUE.



LET'S BURN THAT
CONTRACT.

TO
PIECES.

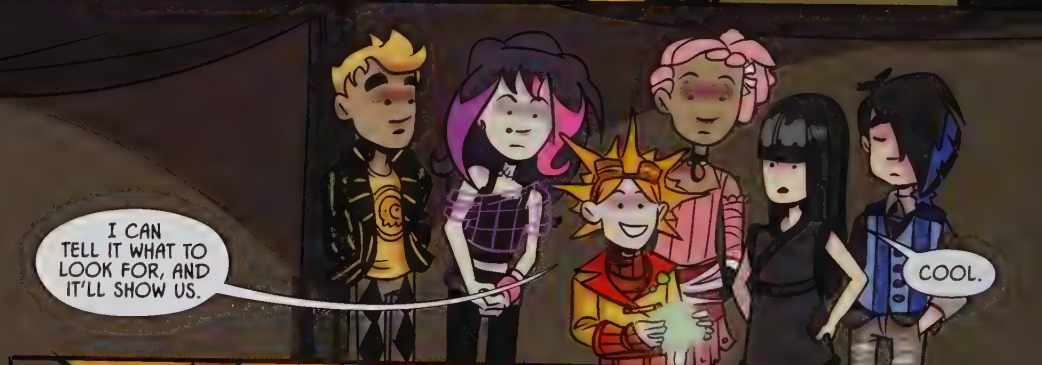


HOW
COULD
ANYONE DO
THAT?

DON'T WORRY,
GINGERBREAD. WE'LL
SAVE YOU.











HEY! I THOUGHT
THE GUITAR WAS
THE ONLY WAY TO
REACH YOU!

I'M
ON A LOT OF
FREQUENCIES.

YAY!

WHOA.

I HEAR
THERE'S TROUBLE
BREWIN'.

SOMETHING
ABOUT CATS AND
A CONTRACT?

YEAH,
WE'VE RUN INTO
A PROBLEM.

...SO NOW WE NEED
TO HELP THESE CATS AND
KEEP AWAY FROM THIS
COMPANY.

WE NEED TO
REACH PEOPLE
AND TELL 'EM
WHAT'S GOING
ON.

BUT WE'RE JUST
A BUNCH OF
KIDS WHO LOVE
MUSIC.

HOW CAN WE
FIGHT A WHOLE
COMPANY?



I CAN SEE YOUR
CAT-NUNDRUM.

MUSIC
TELLS A
STORY.

WE WEAVE
IT WITH SOUND
AND WORDS.

THE
MUSIC OF MY
LIFE--IT NEVER ENDS.
IT FOUND ALL OF YOU
AND BROUGHT YOUR
SONGS TOGETHER
WITH MINE.

IT ALL
COMES BACK
TO THE MELODY,
THE RHYTHM.

AND CATS,
MAN, CATS. MERCURIAL
BEASTIES. WHO KNOWS
WHAT SONGS THEY SING
TO EACH OTHER?

HMM...

CATS,
STORIES,
SONGS...
WAIT...

WHAT...?

YOU'RE ALMOST THERE,
EMILY. I CAN FEEL IT IN
THE BEAT OF YOUR
THOUGHTS.

IF YOU
NEED ME, I'M
ALWAYS...
SOMEWHERE.



AND REMEMBER:
THE GUITAR WILL
GUIDE YOU!

I'M OFF
TO THE WALLS
OF RHYTHM!

LATER,
STRANGERS!



MUSIC TELLS
A STORY.

THESE CATS
HAVE A STORY
TO TELL...



THAT'S
IT!

UH,
WHAT
IS?



SHUT IT!
TIME TO GET
TO WORK!

ER,
WORK ON
WHAT?

SONGS.
THESE CATS
NEED THEIR
STORY TOLD.



WE BURNED
THE MAJOR
MIDNIGHT OIL.

WE JUST
NEED ONE
MORE. THEN WE
CAN START.

START
WHAT?

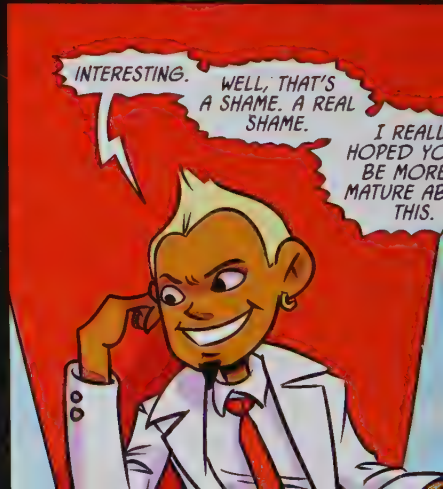
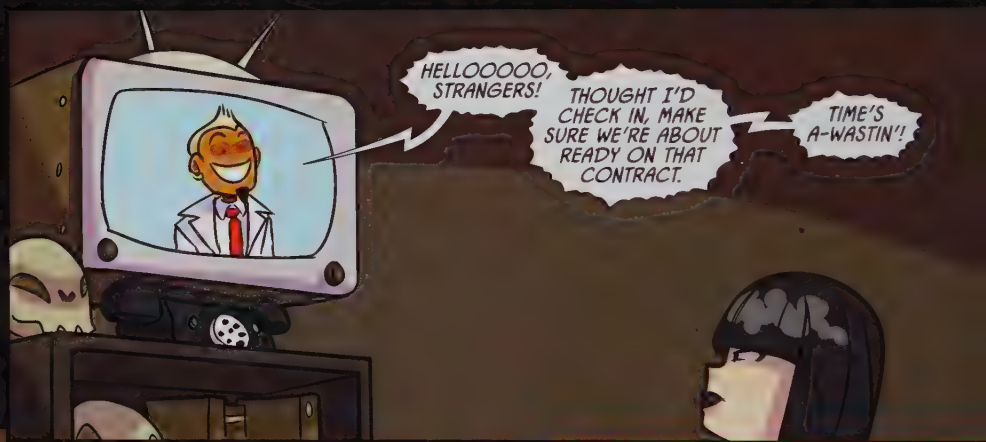


OUR FIRST
ALBUM. A
BENEFIT FOR
THE STRAYS.



FIRST,
WE NEED
TO--





YOU SEE,
WHEN YOU WON
THE CONTEST,
YOU AGREED TO
CERTAIN ITEMS.

AND IF YOU
DON'T HOLD UP
YOUR END, WELL...
THINGS COULD
GET...

...UNPLEASANT.



YOU CAN'T DO
ANYTHING TO US.
WE WON. EVERYONE
KNOWS THAT.

YOU CAN'T
MAKE US SIGN ON
WITH YOU.



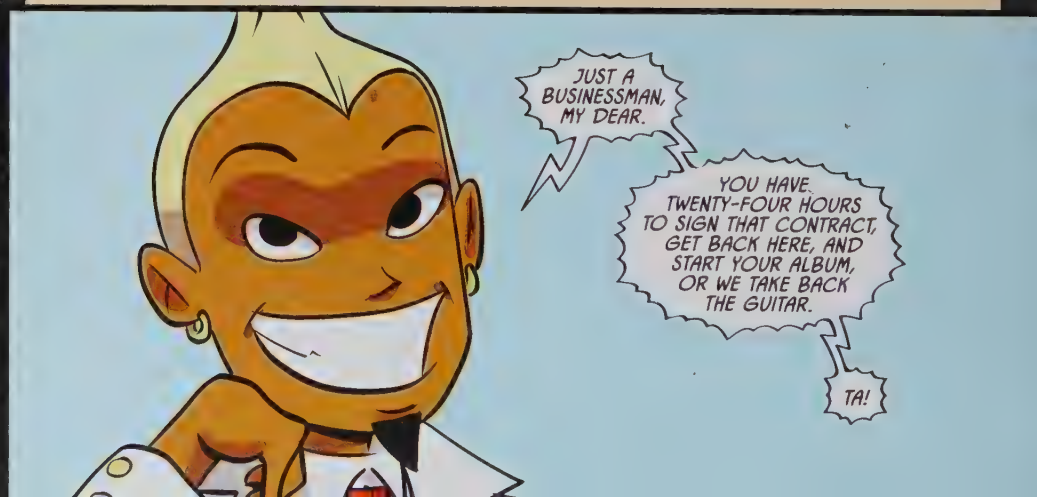
TRUE. I
CAN'T MAKE
YOU DO
THAT.



BUT I CAN
TAKE AWAY
THE KRAKEN
GUITAR.

IT'S PART
OF THE PACKAGE,
YOU SEE.





THIS IS HORRIBLE!

THIS CAN'T BE HAPPENING.

THIS IS MY FAULT.

EMILY? ARE YOU OKAY?



EMILY? I GUESS THAT'S IT, RIGHT?

I MEAN, WE HAVE TO, OR ELSE WE'LL LOSE THE GUITAR.

NO.

NO WAY.

THAT TWO-FACED, HUCKBATING, FIZZBRAINED DRANNITYDREN IS **NOT** GOING TO WIN.

BUT WHAT CAN WE DO?





WE'RE
GOING TO
PLAY.







I'M EMILY, AND
THIS IS MY BAND,
THE STRANGERS.

WILLOW, WINSTON, EVAN,
TRILOGY, AND RAVEN ARE
ALSO MY FRIENDS. WE'VE
BEEN THROUGH A LOT.

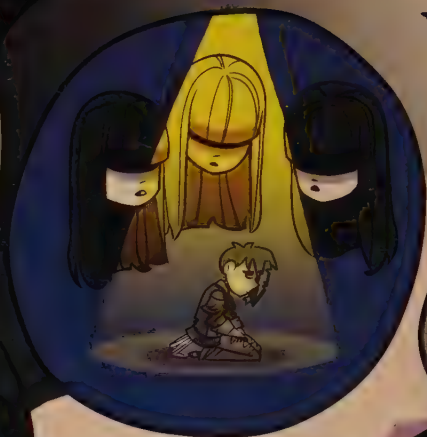
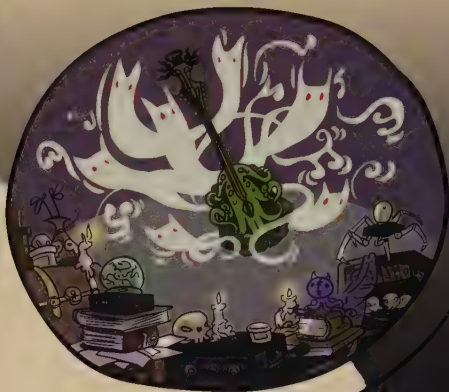
WE WON A CONTEST, A RAD GUITAR,
AND A BATTLE OF THE BANDS. NEXT
STEP WAS AN ALBUM. BUT OF
COURSE, THERE WAS A CATCH.

THIS GUY IS **CRAWLY**.
HE OWNS A RECORD
COMPANY THAT'S BEEN
UP TO NO GOOD,
AND HE THINKS HE
CAN BULLY US.

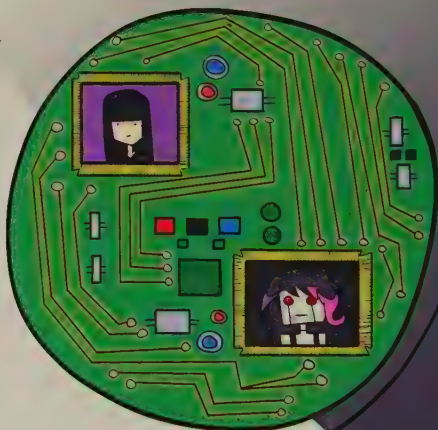
HE HAS **NO**
IDEA WHAT
HE'S IN FOR...

EVERYONE'S
HEAD IS LIKE A
JUNK PILE.

MEMORIES, HOPES,
DREAMS...WE ALL WANT
A LOT OUT OF THIS
WHOLE BAND THING.



WISH I COULD SEE
WHAT THE OTHERS ARE
THINKIN', BUT RIGHT
NOW I'VE GOT ENOUGH
ON MY MIND.



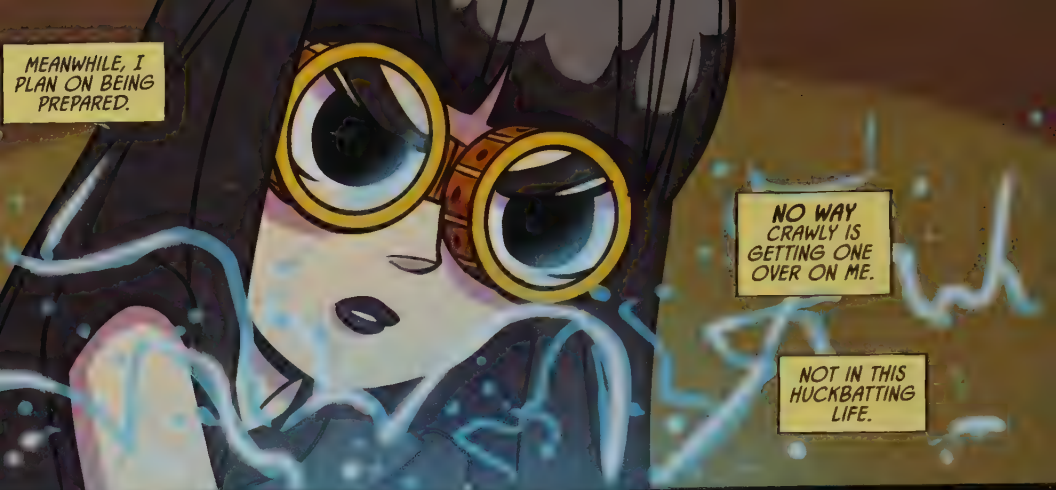


HOW DO WE STOP
CRAWLY, HELP THESE
CATS, AND CUT OUR
OWN ALBUM?



I HAVE NO
IDEA YET.

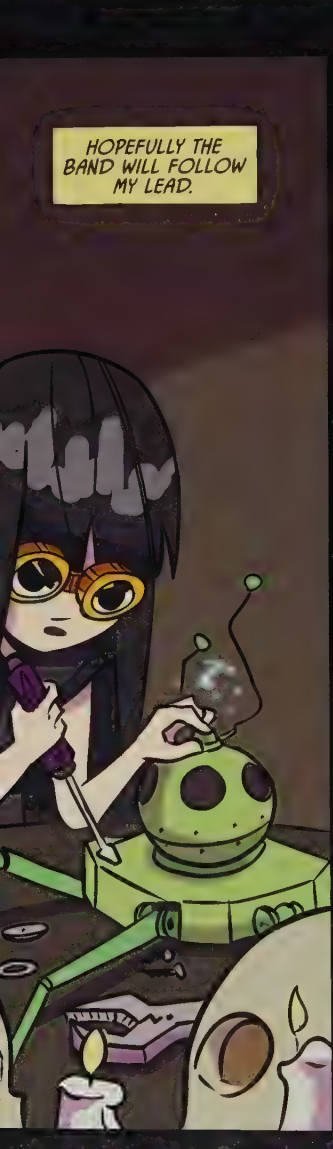
BUT I WILL.
AND THEN
WE'LL ROCK.



MEANWHILE, I
PLAN ON BEING
PREPARED.

NO WAY
CRAWLY IS
GETTING ONE
OVER ON ME.

NOT IN THIS
HUCKBATTING
LIFE.



HOPEFULLY THE
BAND WILL FOLLOW
MY LEAD.



ER, EM?
WHAT IS
THAT?

IT'S
CERTAINLY...
GREEN.

I GUESS
IT'S TIME I
TOLD YOU
GUYS MY
PLAN.



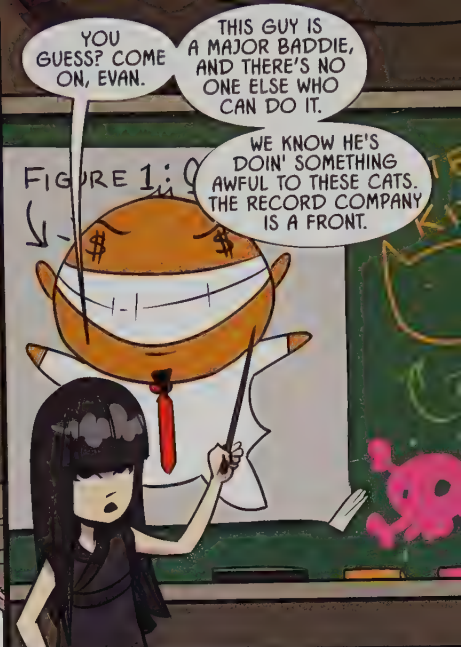
WE ALL KNOW WE HAVE TO STOP CRAWLY, RIGHT?

RIGHT.

YEAH, I GUESS. BUT WE HAVE THIS RECORD TO CUT...

SIT STILL. I'M LISTENING.

GINGERBREAD, I LOVE YOUR TOES.



YOU GUESS? COME ON, EVAN.

THIS GUY IS A MAJOR BADDIE, AND THERE'S NO ONE ELSE WHO CAN DO IT.

WE KNOW HE'S DOIN' SOMETHING AWFUL TO THESE CATS. THE RECORD COMPANY IS A FRONT.

FIGURE 1:



WE DON'T REALLY KNOW WHAT, THOUGH. WE HAVE NO PROOF.

SO WHAT DO WE DO?



EASY. WE BREAK INTO KUTE KITTIES AND FIND OUT.



⇒GASP⇒

⇒GASP⇒

⇒GASP⇒

⇒GASP⇒



GINGERBREAD SAYS, "LET'S DO IT."

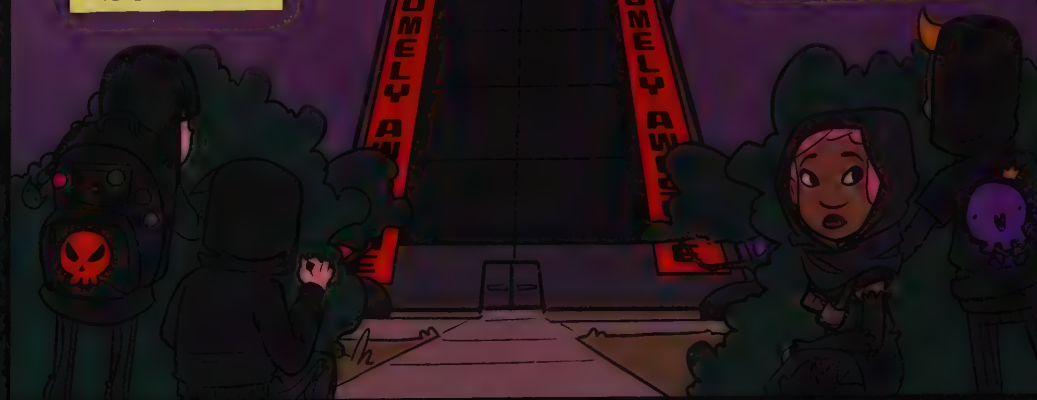
PRRR

PRR P

PRRR

THE CONNECTION
BETWEEN KUTE KITTIES
AND AWESOMELY
AWESOME NEEDS
TO BE EXPOSED.

SOMETIMES YOU HAVE
TO BREAK THE RULES TO
DO THE RIGHT THING.



EMILY, WHAT ARE
WE GOING TO--

SHHHH!



NOT A SECRET WAREHOUSE

HERE WE
GO. EVERYONE,
BE QUIET!



WHAT ARE
WE GOING
TO DO?

EMILY WILL
THINK OF
SOMETHING.
SHE ALWAYS
DOES.

HM.



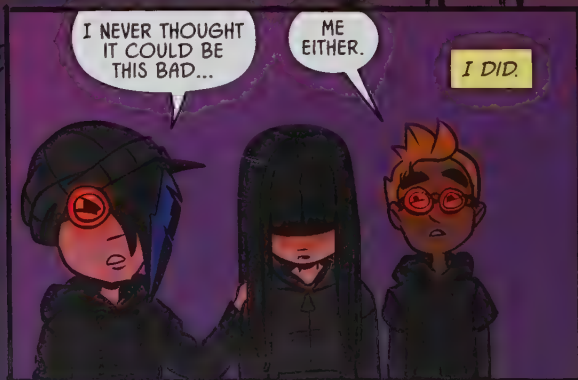
SFSIFFZZLBLIT...

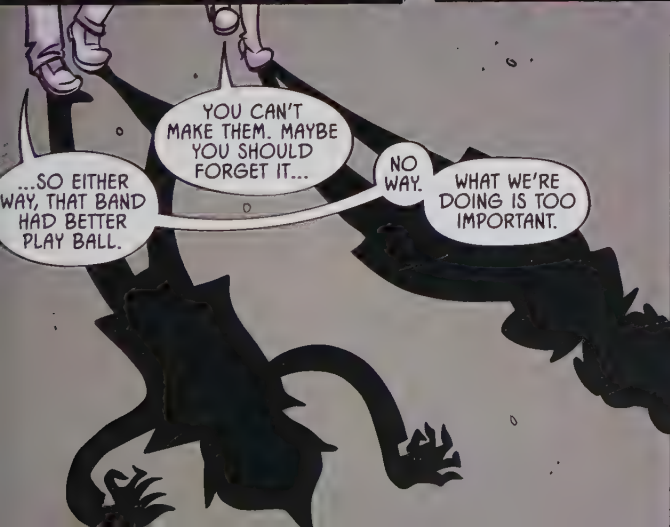
MAYBE WE
SHOULD--

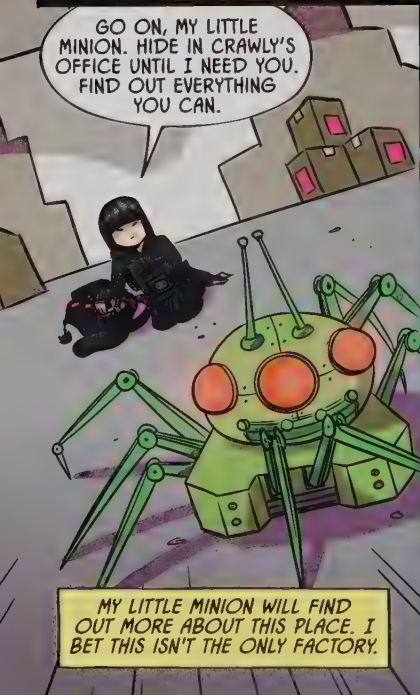
SHHHH!













THE CATS.
THEY NEED TO
BE A PART
OF THIS.

SO GET 'EM
ON UP HERE, AND
WE'LL GET THIS
PARTY STARTED.

MEEEOWL!

WOW. THAT'S
GOING TO
MAKE A KILLER
BACKGROUND
BEAT.

THEY'RE
SAYING,
"OMMMM..."

I THINK I HAVE
A SONG IN MIND, BUT
I'M NOT SURE IF EM
WILL GO FOR IT.

SHE MIGHT.
SHE REALLY
WANTS THIS
ALBUM TO
WORK.

UM, EVAN? EMILY IS
REALLY GREAT. YOU KNOW
I LOVE HER. JUST...BE
CAREFUL, OKAY?

I DON'T
WANT YOU TO
GET HURT.

I KNOW.
DON'T WORRY
ABOUT ME. I
KNOW WHERE
I STAND.

THIS PART
IS TOO
LOOSE.

HAND
ME THAT
WRENCH.

I
KNOW.

IT WEIRDS
ME OUT WHEN
YOU GET LUCID
ALL OF A
SUDDEN.







READY?

READY!

ONE, TWO,
PHYSICS,
ROCK!

I CAN'T HELP
FEELIN' LIKE THE
PROFESSA IS
WATCHING
OVER US.



I HOPE HE'S PROUD.



IT GETS
EASIER AS
WE GO
ALONG.

SONGS
PRACTICALLY
WRITE
THEMSELVES.



♪ CAN'T KEEP
A GOOD STRAY
DOWN... ♪



♪ WE
WERE ALL
LOST... ♪



♪ THEN
FOUND... ♪



AFTER, IT'S TIME
FOR US TO D.I.Y.
THIS RECORD.

WE NEED
TO GET THE
WORD OUT.

WHAT ARE
WE GOING TO
DO ABOUT
CRAWLY?

HE SAID WE DON'T
MATTER. WILL THIS
ALBUM BE ENOUGH
TO EXPOSE THEM AND
FIX THINGS FOR
THESE CATS?

THIS IS JUST THE BEGINNING,
WILLOW. THE ALBUM IS GREAT,
BUT THERE'S A LOT OF
WORK AHEAD OF US.

NO WAY I'M
LETTING THAT
GRIZZBLORT
WIN.

YEAH, BUT
THE GUITAR...
THEY CAN STILL
TAKE IT BACK,
RIGHT?

AND WE
NEED IT. I
MEAN, YOU
DO.

**KNOK
KNOK
KNOK**





...YOU CAN'T.
SORRY, MR. CRAWLY.
THE GUITAR ISN'T
REALLY YOURS.

WHAT ARE
YOU TALKING
ABOUT?



WELL,
YOU NEVER
OWNED IT.

WHAT?
YOU'RE
COMPLETELY
INSANE.



WELL,
RIGHT HERE
IT SAYS--

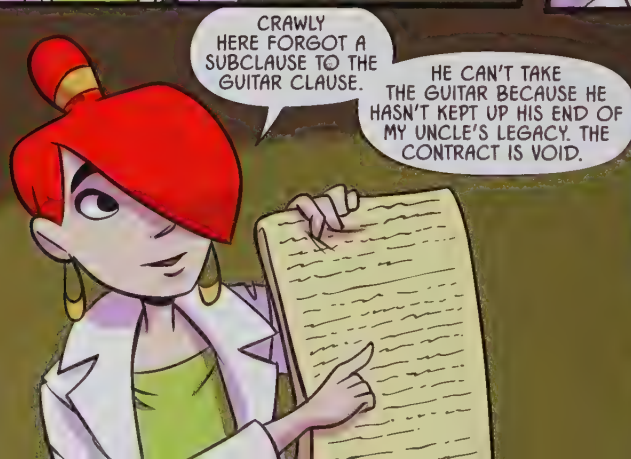
SEE? IT
SAYS RIGHT
THERE THAT
AWESOMELY
AWESOME
OWNS--



NO. IT SAYS
"THE OWNER," WHICH
IS NOT AWESOMELY
AWESOME.

WHAT?

THEN
WHO IS
IT?



I DON'T...
THIS IS...

CONVENIENT?

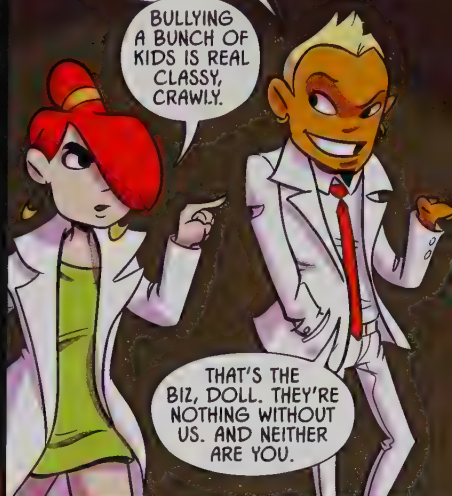
FARBOTTING
AMAZING?

WHATEVER.
WE HAVE
PLANS, BIG
ONES, AND
YOU AND
YOUR...INDIE
RECORD ARE
A BLIP.



WHO'S
GOING TO HEAR
IT WITHOUT OUR
DISTRIBUTION?
NO ONE.

BULLYING
A BUNCH OF
KIDS IS REAL
CLASSY,
CRAWLY.



THAT'S THE
BIZ, DOLL. THEY'RE
NOTHING WITHOUT
US. AND NEITHER
ARE YOU.



THERE ARE MORE
WHERE YOU CAME
FROM. YOU HAVE NO
IDEA WHAT AWESOMELY
AWESOME IS REALLY
CAPABLE OF.

YOU'RE
NOTHING
SPECIAL.

JUST A
BUNCH OF
WANNABES.

THAT'S
WHERE YOU'RE
WRONG.

YOU'RE
ABOUT TO FIND
OUT JUST HOW BAD
IT IS TO CROSS THE
STRANGERS...

AND
ME.



I'M QUAKING
IN MY BOOTS.
REALLY.



YOU
WILL BE.

BECAUSE
WE'RE GOING
TO RUIN YOU.



WE'RE GOING
TO MAKE SURE
EVERYONE KNOWS
WHAT YOU'RE
REALLY DOING.

WHAT CAN A
BUNCH OF TALENTED,
ANGRY, CREATIVE KIDS
WITH A PLAN DO?

WE'RE GOING ON TOUR!

BIGGEST, BADDEST,
MOST DRAPTASTIC TOUR
EVER. AND IN EVERY CITY,
WE'RE GOING TO EXPOSE
AWESOMELY AWESOME
AND YOUR CONNECTION
TO KUTE KITTIES.



OUR
RECORD IS
GOING TO ROCK
YOU TO DUST.

LET'S
GO!

EMILY AND THE
STRANGERS--WE'RE
COMING TO A
CITY NEAR YOU!

The End



THE
FOLLOWING
STORY WAS
FEATURED IN
THE COMIC
BOOK LEGAL
DEFENSE FUND
BENEFIT BOOK

LIBERTY
ANNUAL 2014

PUBLISHED
BY IMAGE
COMICS



Emily and the Strangers in... THE IDEA FACTORY

Story by Mariah Huehner & Rob Reger
Art by Cat Farris
Lettering by Nate Piekos of Blambot®

...AND THEN
WE COULD TURN IT
INTO A FOUNTAIN THAT
DISPENSES DIFFERENT
FLAVORS OF
CHOCOLATE!

OR! WE
COULD GIVE IT A
HUCKBATINGLY HUGE
NUMBER OF ARMS SO
IT CAN DO ALL OUR
HOMEWORK AND
CHORES!

WHAT ABOUT
UMBRELLAS? TO
KEEP OUT THE
SUN?

AND A
POOL! FOR
CATS!

WE NEED TO PICK AN
IDEA FOR THIS WEIRD &
WONDERFUL SCIENCE FAIRE.
BUT IT'S TOO MUCH FUN
TO THINK THEM UP!

IT HAS TO
BE MAJOR.
SPECTACULAR.
FIZZBITTINGLY
SPLENDID!

WHAT ABOUT A TIME
MACHINE THAT ONLY
GOES TO 1818, WHEN
FRANKENSTEIN WAS
WRITTEN?!

OR A
SPACESHIP THAT'S
POWERED BY SEA
CREATURES! OR SEA
CREATURES POWERED
BY SPACE?!

WHAT ABOUT
A MACHINE THAT
MAKES TINY CAT
SWEATERS? OR A
GIANT TEACUP
PIRATE SHIP?

ENOUGH!

WHAT THE
DRAPPLES
ARE YOU?

IT'S SO
CUTE AND
FUZZY!

I'M THE
AUDIT, HEAD
OF IMAGINATION
STATION SECURITY.
YOU TWO HAVE
CAREENED OVER
YOUR LIFETIME
QUOTA WITH THIS
LATEST BATCH
OF IDEAS.

YOU MUSTN'T
THINK WHATEVER YOU LIKE
ALL WILLY-NILLY, ALL CARELESS
AND FANCY FREE! THERE
ARE RULES!

YOUR IDEAS ARE TOO UNRULY, DISORDERLY,
CHAOTIC. MESSY. WHERE WILL IT ALL LEAD?
WHAT CANTANKEROUS TROUBLES COULD
THEY UNLEASH?

TOO DANGEROUS.
EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY, YOUR
HYPERACTIVE IMAGINATIONS
ARE SUSPENDED.
FOREVER.

RULES

BUT THAT'S
TERRIBLE!

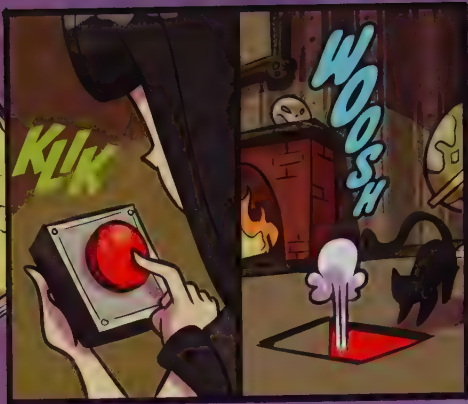
FORGET IT. NO
WAY. NEVER GONNA
HAPPEN...

OH,
YEAH?

YOU CAN'T
STOP IT. IT'S
DONE.

RULES

EMILY'S RIDE THROUGH TIME AND SPACE



AH!

OH, RELAX.
YOU'LL BE FINE.
NOW, LISTEN
UP.

$E=MC^2$

YOU CAN'T
STIFLE IDEAS BECAUSE
THEY **MIGHT** NOT WORK OUT.
OTHERWISE, NOTHING WOULD
EVER BE INVENTED OR
CREATED.

BUT WHAT
IF THEY'RE BAD
IDEAS? WHAT IF
PEOPLE GET HURT?
WHAT IF THEY
COMBUST, COLLIDE,
OR CONCUSS?

THEY'RE
IDEAS, NOT
METEORS.

BESIDES,
THAT'S NOT THE
IDEA. IT'S THE
PEOPLE WHO USE
THEM. AND WHAT
ABOUT ALL THE
GOOD THINGS?
THE STORIES AND
INVENTIONS
AND CURES?





Weird & Wonderful SCIENCE FAIRE

WOW!

I'VE NEVER
SEEN ANYTHING
LIKE IT!

WHAT
DOES IT
DO?

THIS IS **THE
IDEA FACTORY**. IF
YOU'RE EVER STUCK ON
A PROBLEM OR CAN'T
THINK OF AN IDEA,
THIS WILL HELP YOU
FIND IT.

NO IDEA
IS TOO BIG OR
TOO SMALL.

EVERYONE
IS WELCOME!
ALL IDEAS ARE
WORTHWHILE!

READY?

YES!
LET'S GET
THINKIN'!

The End

Emily[®] AND the Strangers **SKETCHBOOK**

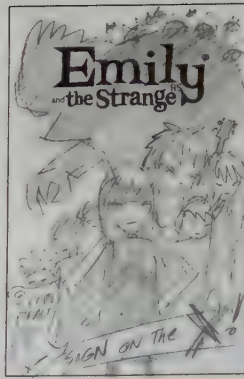
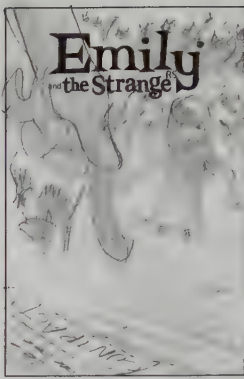
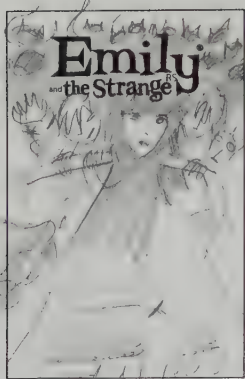
ART BY
CAT FARRIS
and **BUZZ**
PARKER



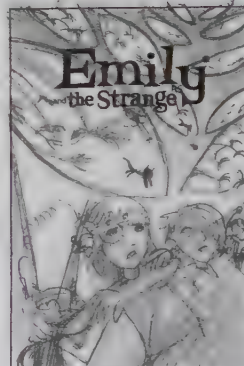
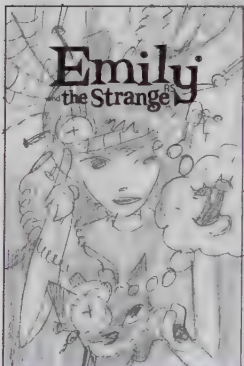
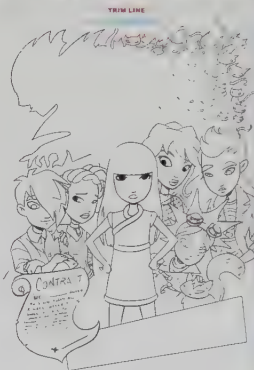
EMILY ☺



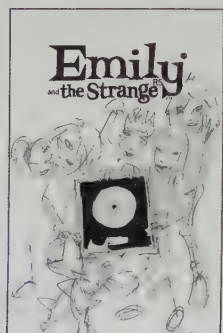
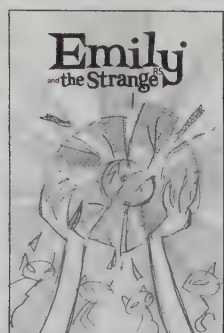
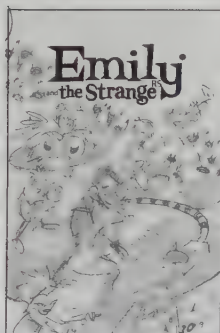
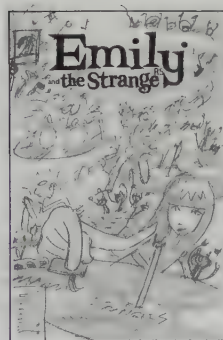
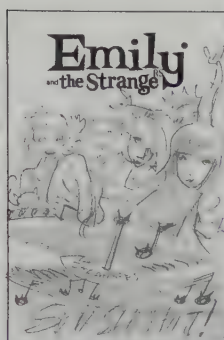
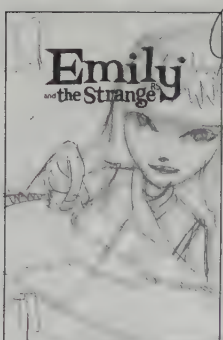
Cat Farris's expressive and cartoony style makes her a perfect fit for *Emily and the Strangers*, and these initial character sketches showcase exactly how much personality she infuses into these characters!



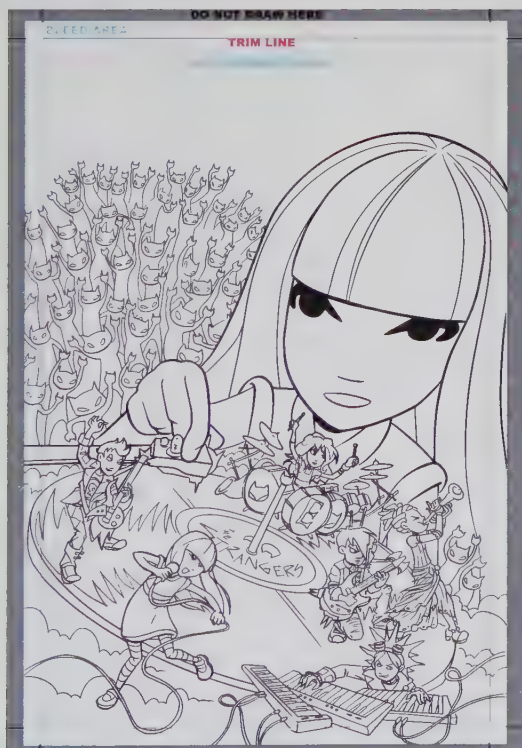
The cover process for each issue begins with longtime Emily artist Buzz Parker sketching up a number of ideas. After discussion about which sketch best exemplifies the issue's story, Buzz tightens up his pencils and passes them on to Cat Farris.



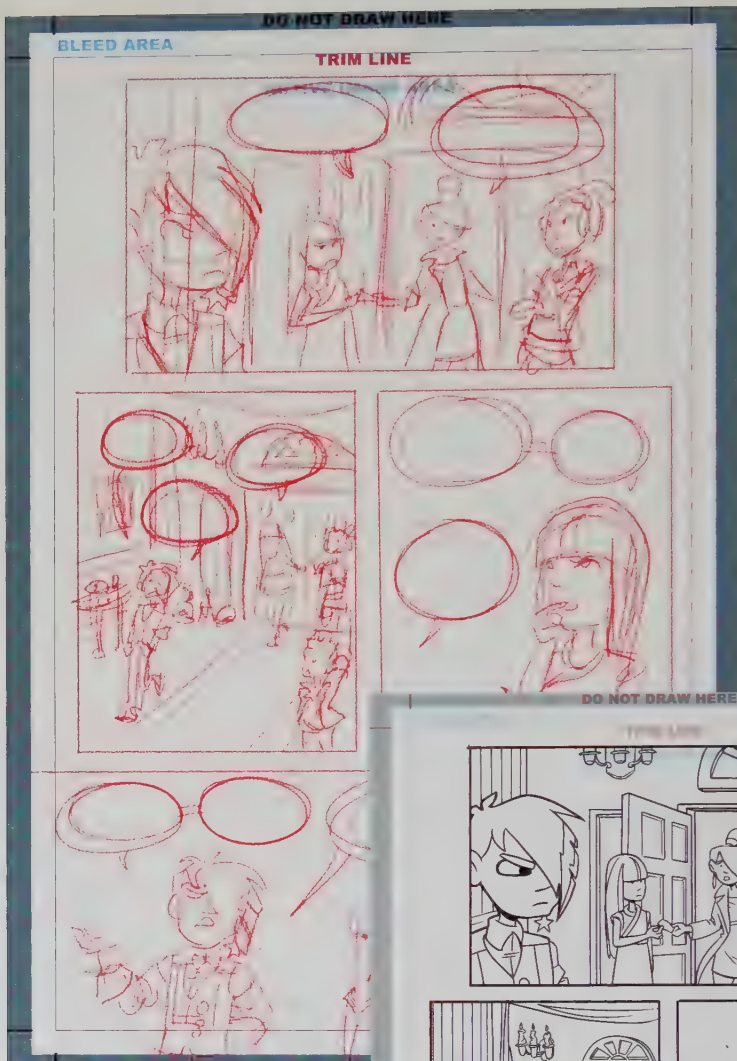
Cat then applies her style and additional details to flesh out the design for the inks.



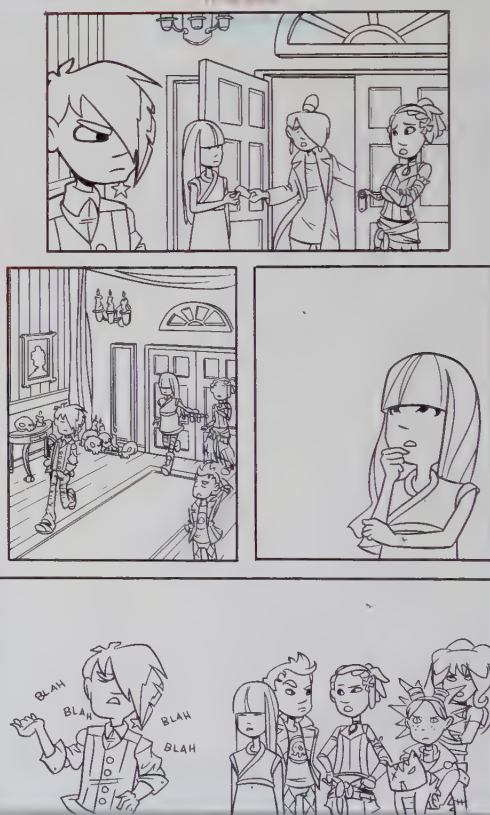
gold record?



Finally, Cat works her color magic, and we've got our final cover!



Here's a comparative look at Cat Farris's rough layouts and pencils, compared to the final inks for a page from the book. See the completed version of this piece on page 36 of this collection!



Emily[®]

AND the Strangers^{RS}

Volume 1

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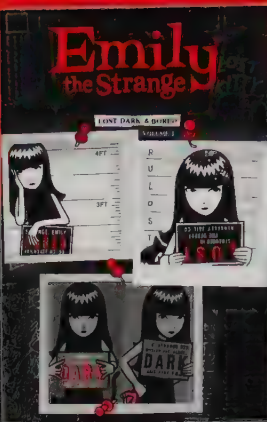
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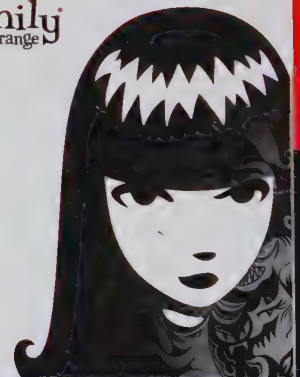
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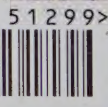
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[Cat] Farris captures the right tone by mixing the offbeat
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